

STORING, THAWING AND WARMING BREASTMILK

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends the following for safe storage and preparation of breastmilk.

Containers for breastmilk

- Store your breastmilk in clean containers. Use glass bottles, hard plastic bottles or plastic milk storage bags.
- Put the date and your baby's name on the container. This will help the caregiver give your breastmilk to your baby.
- Put just 2 to 4 ounces in each container or the amount you think your baby will take at a feeding. Throw away any breastmilk left over after the feeding.

Keeping freshly collected milk

- Cool your breastmilk quickly in a refrigerator or cooler with an ice pack.

Refrigerator storage

- You can store breastmilk in the refrigerator for 3 days. It is best to store it in the back (coldest) part of the refrigerator.
- Freeze your breastmilk if you won't use it within 24 hours.
- You can add cold fresh breastmilk to a container of frozen breastmilk as long as there is less fresh breastmilk than frozen breastmilk.

Freezer storage

- Leave some room at the top of the container, because breastmilk expands as it freezes.
- You can freeze breastmilk for:
 - 1 month in a freezer with a door separate from the refrigerator, or
 - 3-6 months in a separate freezer that keeps food very hard (0 degrees Fahrenheit)



Thawing or warming

- Breastmilk may be fed to your baby cool or warmed to room temperature.
- Thaw frozen milk by placing it in the refrigerator the night before you plan to use it. Or gently shake the container while holding it under warm running water.
- To warm breastmilk place the container under warm running water or in a bowl of warm water.
- Do not thaw or heat breastmilk on the stove, in the microwave or with hot water. Heating the milk too hot destroys the good things in the milk that keep your baby from getting sick.
- Thawed breastmilk can be refrigerated for up to 24 hours. Do not re-freeze your milk.

Appearance, taste and smell of breastmilk

- Fresh breastmilk is made of foremilk and hindmilk. Foremilk flows first and looks thin and watery. Hindmilk flows later and looks whiter and thicker.
- Breastmilk may look bluish, yellowish or brownish. Some of the foods or food colorings you eat can change the color of your breastmilk. This is OK.
- Some mothers worry when they see their milk separate into layers. This separation is normal. Shake it gently before feeding your baby.
- Frozen breastmilk may look or smell different than fresh breastmilk. These changes are normal and the milk is still good.

Note: These guidelines should not be used for formula.



Department of Health and Family Services

Division of Public Health

PPH 4959 (07/00)

State of Wisconsin